

908 News

NALC Branch 908
AFL-CIO
PO Box 150
Pennsville, NJ
08070

South Jersey Letter Carriers

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Newsletter Com: Spence, Lipski, Powell Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com January 2019

Presidents Report

Happy New Year Brothers and Sisters. I hope everyone had a very happy and healthy holiday season. I would like to give a shout out to the record number of members who attended our December meeting. It was nice to see such a large turnout and I hope this trend continues going forward. I would like to once again congratulate steward **Frank Ingemi**, out of our Hammonton office, who was honored as this year's shop steward of the year at our December meeting. Frank has been a steward for many years in Hammonton, and also serves as an area steward for our branch in Elmer. Frank is one of those people who is not afraid of doing what it takes to protect our members and this award was long overdue. Thanks Frank, for all you do and continue to do for the members of your office and this branch.

As we head into the new year we will once again have many challenges to face, among those are route inspections in a few of our offices, the starting of negotiations for a new contract which expires at the end of this year, a new Congressional cast in D.C. which the Democrats hold control, which couldn't have come at a better time. As many of you are aware, the Task force President Trump asked for has released its findings and there are not many positive things in there that are good for us. Hopefully, with a split in the Senate and House, we will be able to continue to keep the pressure on those in charge to do the right thing for the postal service. Download the NALC app to stay up to date on the latest news.

I mentioned at our last meeting the back pay that was owed to the CCA's who didn't get paid for Holidays once our contract was ratified. There was a settlement by management and the union that I have sent to all stewards, which shows how much each CCA will receive. The payouts were anywhere from a low of \$104.46 all the way up to \$487.48. Again, this is why having Union representation is so vital. Do you think they would have paid anything if we didn't have anyone fighting for us? Hopefully, the remainder of back-pay issues for the other issues will be resolved shortly.

Another item I mentioned at our meeting dealt with Wounded Warrior Leave. We have some members who qualify for this leave and I wanted to get it out there so if you are qualified you need to know this important update. In the past this leave was only eligible to those on the rolls on November 2106 and could get 104 hours of leave to use on a one-time basis. This rule has been changed effective January 5, 2019. Now, all eligible employees will receive 104 hours of leave each year to be used to treat their condition. To qualify you need to be a disabled veteran with a 30 percent or more combined disability rating. Please take advantage of this benefit if you qualify. Remember, you have to request it, the postal service won't come to you.

Also, as I mentioned earlier, we will be having route inspections for a couple of our offices in the next couple of months. I was shocked to hear the district sent the inspection teams into our offices during December and was actually doing pre-walks! Listen, I know they are crunched for time, but really! If they didn't have anything for the examiners to do, why not send them back to their offices and free up some carriers to help with the parcel deliveries. To walk routes when we are trying to get a job done with extra packages is an insult to me. I guess that goes to show how much respect this district leadership has for us. I am not sure what they thought they could accomplish in offices where there is no mail at this time of year! Whatever!

Lastly, it looks like the APWU will be heading to arbitration for a new contract, so keep an eye on those results as they may have an impact on our negotiations this fall. It appears the postal service may be taking a different approach this round. Hopefully, they will want to continue to work with us, since we are trying to keep this company afloat with all of our suggestions and foresight as to what will work and what won't. Time will tell if we still have a willing partner.

Hope to see everyone at this month's meeting.

- Gary DiGiacomo - President
856-906-2838

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, January 16th @ 8 p.m.**, at the American Legion Hall, 502 Colonial Ave., North Woodbury. The regular monthly meetings of the Branch are held on the Third Wednesday of each month @ 8 p.m. The Executive Board and Shop Steward meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Executive Board meets @ **7:30 p.m.**, and the Shop Stewards @ **8 p.m.** The next meeting of the Executive Board and Shop Stewards will be on **Wednesday, January 9th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Attendance Prize Winner!

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on Wednesday **December 19th, Charles Greene**, a member out of our Woodbury Office won the **\$250** attendance prize. The prize now stands at \$25 and will increase \$25 per meeting, up to a maximum of \$250, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

Comments from the VP

Happy New Year!! to all our active and retired members and their families! I would also like to thank all our active carriers and Cca's for a job well done throughout the year and especially during the hectic and record-breaking holiday season. As in past years, I recommend that everyone start the New Year off by checking their Personnel file for mistakes and for discipline that should have been removed. The Postal Service, in compliance with OPM, has gotten rid of the paper versions of the OPF (Official Personnel File), the files are all digital now and you can view your file from your home computer. Go to the eOPF website at <https://eopf.usps.gov/eOPF/jsp/essLogin.jsp>. Once there, you will need your EIN (Employee Identification Number), this is the number on your pay stub, and your USPS PIN number (the same one you use for Postal EASE). If you forget your PIN, call 1-877-477-3273 and follow the prompts to have a new PIN mailed to you. Once you log in you can view and print anything in your file. If you find something that should not be there, contact your Shop Steward. In other matters, it was brought to my attention at the branch budget meeting in October that the branch has been actively looking for a new building. Although I haven't been asked to take part in this search, I am going to express my opinion on the issue of buying a new building. First, is there a need for a new building at all? We use the current building twice a month for 10 months of the year for meetings and in December for the kids Christmas party. We have approximately 30-35 members per monthly meeting, of which 15-20 are branch officers and stewards, that's about 15 regular and retired members attending the monthly meeting. The 9x12 room downstairs is used for our office along with some

storage. Most, if not all the officers and stewards do their work at home on their computers. We do print the newsletter from that 9x12 room but that's about it. There is a water issue with the downstairs of the current building which needs to be addressed. In my opinion we should first talk with the current owners of the building we are currently in about solutions to that problem. I want to make clear that the upstairs where the meetings are held is fine. It could use a little tender loving care, but it is fine for our monthly meetings. So, even if we must make other arrangements for our 9x12 space, does that mean the branch has to invest in a new building with a mortgage, utilities and insurance, etc. when we only would be using it twice a month. Since we do our banquet and picnic at other facilities, could we not rent a small office space if need be to keep our printer, computer, office supplies and files? It's something for all our members, especially our younger members to seriously think about and a reason to attend the monthly meetings to ask questions and be informed. I will bring a motion to the executive board at our next meeting on January 9, to set up a volunteer cleanup crew composed of members of our branch to help with the maintenance of the existing building and maybe we can solve some of the issues in the existing building. I have been on vacation and out sick the past few weeks, so I will not have anything new to report on the **Camden (AKA Hell Hole) Annex** until next month. If any active, Cca or retired member needs my aid on any issue please contact me anytime at **(856) 906-2026 or 908vp@comcast.net.**

**Proud to Be Union
Mike Powell - Vice President**

Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Happy New Year Brothers and Sisters. Hope all had a great holiday season. As the year ended so did optical reimbursements. If I had yours before Dec. 31st it will be counted as 2018. If after the 31st my apologies, but the books have to be closed, and the New Year started. Any request after the date will be for 2019. Send your receipt for optical reimbursement with your name, mailing address, and office/retire to me at: George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.

A few questions have come by me recently, and I have to retract my answer to the question. When does the FMLA begin, and end. It begins upon approval, but ends at the end of the USPS leave year. The leave year always begins the first day of the first full pay period in the calendar year. So if you are asked to update your FMLA at the beginning of the year, then you must do so. My apologies to a couple folks as I forgot this began in 2015 as changes seem to never end. The new leave year begins this year on January 5, 2019.

Any questions regarding all the above always feel free to give me a call at 856-304-8665....Happy New Year all. Be safe.

- George Greenwood, HBR

Ozzie's Corner

On December 4th, President Trump's task force released its report on the evaluation of the Postal Service. NALC President Fred Rolando said the legislative suggestions in the report will be most likely cancelled out by the time it reaches Congress. In addition, The NALC is studying the report in greater detail and any additional info they find in it, they will release that information at a later date. The report highlights a full blown attack on collective bargaining rights for postal employees. Basically, America's postal unions would have no right to negotiate wages. Also, the report mentions huge service cuts in the frequency and quality of delivery, which in turn will result in larger losses in City Letter Carrier jobs. Furthermore, the report wants the Postal Service to increase pricing on package delivery (The fastest growing and most profitable segment in USPS's volume). The NALC states raising prices on this issue would damage and destroy our customers and employees alike. However, there was good news in the report, the statement mentioned nothing about privatization of the USPS. NALC addressed that this victory was in large portion to the huge co-sponsorship of HR 993 and our public mobilizing efforts (re: October's national rally). A second positive, was the Task Force's realization on fixing the health pre-funding mandate. In closing, the NALC vows to work hard and diligently to address all of the findings mentioned in the report to Congress and the administration. As we ring in the new year, I want to thank 3 of our latest LCPF contributors: Tiffany Jolade (Deptford), Lisa Owens (Blackwood) and William Stopfer III (Blackwood). Remember, to protect your collective bargaining rights, your job, pension and health benefits, \$1 is as little as it takes per pay

to join the fight. My phone number is (856) 220-8658 if you need to reach me for any matters in our branch. I hope to see you all at January 16th's meeting. In Solidarity,

Ozzie Lecky - Letter Carrier Political Fund Chairman

**(By making a contribution to the LCPF, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the NALC or of employment by the USPS, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The LCPF will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the LCPF are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the LCPF from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administration staff, or their families.)*

2019 Branch Budget Approved

Those in attendance and eligible to vote at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch held on December 19th unanimously approved the Branch 2019 Budget. The budget estimates the receipt and expenditures of the Branch at \$236,849.00 for 2019.

12th Annual Branch Banquet - April 6

The 12th Annual Branch 908 Banquet will be held on April 6th, 2018 from 7:00 – 11:00pm at Elizabeth's Ballroom located at Highland Blvd. & Sylvan Ave. in Gloucester City, NJ. This is a great night to eat, drink, dance, and socialize with good friends and to honor those members who have retired in the past year as well as those who have been selected to receive Branch Awards. If you have retired in 2018 after the last banquet contact Branch Vice-President, Mike Powell @ 856-906-2026 or 908vp@comcast.net. All Branch Members, family and friends are encouraged to attend at a cost of \$20 pp. The cost for current Branch retirees is \$10. Tickets may be picked up from Branch Vice-President, Mike Powell at any Branch Meeting, or by mailing a check or Money order made out to NALC Branch 908 by March 23rd.

Grievance Log Step B Decision

Bridgeton - Management violated Article 41.1 of the National Agreement when a regular route and a carrier technician position were not posted for bid within 14 Days after becoming newly established duty assignments. As a remedy, Management is directed to cease and desist. Furthermore, the successful bidders shall receive a lump sum payment of **\$50.00** for this blatant violation.

Bridgeton - Management violated Article 41 of the National Agreement when they removed a CCA from his hold-down assignment. As a remedy, the CCA will be compensated the applicable rate of pay for the **8.0 hours** of lost work that resulted from this violation.

Deptford - Management **did not** have just cause to issue a Letter of Warning for "Unsatisfactory Performance" for failing to deliver an Express mail by the guaranteed time of 15:00. Due to many mitigating factors management refused to acknowledge, this Letter shall be **rescinded and expunged** immediately.

Pre-Arbitration Settlement

Marlton - Grievant will be paid a lump sum payment of **\$9856.00**. This case dealt with management not allowing the grievant to work, even after submitting medical documentation. The local parties were asking for sensitive medical information, which violated the HIPPA laws, and the grievant was kept out of work for an extended period of time. Thanks to our Business Agent, Dave Napadano, and Labor relation specialist Mike Kulikowski, they righted this terrible decision by the local parties in harming one of our brothers.

New Branch Attorney

Free consultation and reduced rates for all Branch 908 members.

**PLATT
& RISO, P.C.**

Attorneys at Law

Stuart A. Platt

40 BERLIN AVENUE • STRATFORD, NEW JERSEY 08084
TEL (856) 784-8500 EXT. 20 • FAX (856) 784-8050
platt@prlawoffice.com • www.prlawoffice.com